

AIR COMMANDO

Any Time, Any Place

Vol. 55, Issue 1

16th Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Jan. 6, 2006

Seven members of 20th SOS honored

by **Jamie Haig**
16th SOW Public Affairs

Seven members of the 20th Special Operations Squadron were decorated Dec. 16 for their heroic actions in Fallujah, Iraq.

Capt. Matthew Berry, Master Sgt. Randy Kensey, Tech. Sgt. Byron Allen, and Staff Sgts. James Bowling and Christopher Dalton were all presented with the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor for their efforts during a resupply mission April 12, 2004.

Master Sgt. Robert Colanino and Staff Sgt. Jesse Lee were presented the Bronze Star with Valor for their actions on the same mission.

Two crewmembers, Capt. Steven Edwards, now at the 14th Weapons School, and Airman 1st Class Casey Mabry, were also cited for

valor during this engagement, but were unable to attend the ceremony. Tech. Sgt. Christian MacKenzie, who was wounded during the mission, assisted Col. Mark Alsld, 16th Operations Group commander, in handing out the medals.

On the night of April 12, the crew flew two MH-53J PAVE LOW helicopters in formation to resupply troops in contact with enemy forces. They couldn't land on their first approach.

As the second ship exited the area, a rocket propelled grenade exploded in the nose of the aircraft. The RPG blasted through the windshield, wounding the pilot, copilot and flight engineer. The blast severed communications lines, destroying the instrument panel and automatic flight controls. The gaping hole rendered the aircraft nearly uncontrollable.

Despite his injuries, a severely-damaged aircraft, blacked-out conditions and unfamiliar terrain, Captain Edwards, with the aid of Sergeants Kensey and Colanino, managed to crash land the aircraft in the hostile enemy territory.

Upon landing, Sergeants Kensey and Lee secured the damaged helicopter, directed Army special forces Soldiers in establishing a defensive perimeter, and returned to evacuate the crew, weapons and classified materials.

Sergeant Colanino moved the seriously-injured flight



Photographs by Senior Airman Heidi Davis

Capt. Matthew Berry, 20th Special Operations Squadron, receives a Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor from Col. Mark Alsld, 16th Operations Group commander, Dec. 16 in Freedom Hanger.

engineer out of the damaged cockpit and administered first aid. Then he removed the injured pilots from the cockpit.

The damaged systems didn't allow for a normal shut down of the engines. However, in pitch-black surroundings, under direct enemy fire, Sergeant Colanino's knowledge of the aircraft system allowed him to find the correct wires and disengage the system.

After the second ship was struck by the RPG, the crew of the first MH-53J took immediate, evasive action avoiding a possible mid-air collision. While under fire

from enemy forces, Sergeant Allen and Airman Mabry spotted enemy concentrations and returned accurate fire, while Sergeant Dalton dispensed flares.

Using the navigation guidance system, Sergeant Bowling quickly located the downed aircraft. Captain Berry then passed along the coordinates to the crew of an AC-130 that engaged enemy forces.

While flying to the damaged aircraft, Sergeant Dalton talked Captain Berry through the approach, landing 200 feet away from the crash site. Sergeant Allen set up a defensive perimeter and

provided cover for three Soldiers to evacuate the crew from the helicopter.

With all downed crewmembers aboard and initiating a take off, the helicopter again took fire from enemy forces, prompting Sergeant Allen and Airman Mabry to suppress the barrage, allowing the crew to safely fly out of harm's way.

"These warriors define 'cool under pressure,'" said Lt. Col. Scott Howell, 20th SOS commander.

When faced with a difficult situation under enemy fire, they fell back on their training and focused on their mission."



Master Sgt. Robert Colanino, 20th SOS, receives a Bronze Star with Valor.

News Eight Hurlburt Field Airmen selected for STEP promotion

News



Feature



Sports



Wingman

0-0-1-3
0 Drinks under 21
0 DUIs
1 Drink an hour
3 Drinks a night

Weather

	High	Low
Today	52	38
Sat.	50	30
Sun.	62	40

Home of America's Air Commandos

BRAC process lengthy, but worth wait

by **Michael Wynne**
Secretary of the Air Force

The Base Realignment and Closure process was lengthy and exceptionally well supported throughout our Air Force.

All the participants are to be congratulated for the job they did.

The BRAC commission worked as well through all of the secretary's recommendations and altered those where there were areas of disagreement. This has resulted in the president's certified results being placed before Congress, providing them an opportunity for review. This process

ends in November, when a new phase begins.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense team has requested business plans for those recommendations, which the Air Force has the lead on implementation, either from the Joint Cross Service teams or as developed by the Air Force team. These will detail the plan as it affects each installation.

Submittal of these plans initiates the process for us to take charge in terms of implementation of these actions. For any actions that were altered or denied, there should be no activity forthcoming, as we should be

concentrating on actions certified by the president.

While this activity proceeds, there should be a quiet period, such that our installations and our people adjust to the actions being implemented.

Therefore, any action that would be perceived as a BRAC-like action, whether initiated from an operational or economic basis, should be submitted to the installations, Environment and Logistics Assistant Secretary and to the undersigned for approval.

This approval process will remain in effect throughout 2006 and will then be re-evaluated.

We can't afford to lose 'bubble'

by **Maj. Monti Knode**
16th CS
deputy commander

I'm an American.

As such, I have a predisposition to want to win.

Whether I'm playing pick-up basketball at the health and wellness center, dodge ball against a fellow unit, poker with my brothers, videogames with my children or just watching my favorite NFL team on Sunday, I love to win.

Not so long ago, the U.S. men's Olympic basketball team, nicknamed the "Dream Team," fought and won a gold medal. They dominated.

Since 1992, the sport's popularity has exploded internationally, and you're now likely to see more foreign names on a NBA basketball court than in a NHL hockey rink.

The world took note and other teams prepared

to fight and win.

In 2004, we didn't just lose the games, we lost "the bubble."

At the time of the original Dream Team, the United States had just carried out a convincing joint campaign in Iraq.

Hearts swelled with pride in our armed services' ability to fight and win – we dominated.

Ten years later, our special operations forces demonstrated the same in Afghanistan – we're still fighting and winning.

Countries around the world have taken note, preparing themselves. This is a game in which we can't afford to lose "the bubble."

We don't know what the other team is going to throw at us, which is why we have to be ready. We

Aimpoint Fight and win

practice and prepare, over and over, to get it right

and improve with every step along the way.

We're starting 2006 with a series of operational readiness exercises to exercise and test, and prepare to answer the call.

Don't believe for a second that the upcoming operational readiness inspection is "the call" – it's all part of our preparation. It's our fight.

When aircraft swarm like Florida's love bugs over Hurlburt Field, that's when we're called on to win. Airmen fight to win. Otherwise, why fight?

We only get the prize when we win, and we can only win when all three of our Aimpoints are heeded. One fails, all fail – and ours is a no-fault, no-fail mission.

Our country demands domination, from sports and uniformed heroes. Whether palletizing cargo or pulling triggers, flying aircraft sorties or driving your wingman home safely, we can't win – let alone dominate – unless we're all committed to doing so.

So, whatever you're doing, get into it.

Palletize that cargo like your increment is in competition with every other chalk; prepare your personal readiness folder like it's an annual award package; physically train like a medal awaits you at the finish line; care for your people like they're your own sons and daughters.

A short, wise, old man once said, "Do, or do not. There is no try."

It's said if you sit at a poker table and can't spot "the fish" in the first five minutes, chances are you're it. Look at your wingmen.

Who fights to win?

16th SOW Aimpoints

- Fight and win
- Take best care of our wingmen, families and resources
- Become the next generation of Air Force and Air Commando leaders

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Submitting articles

The deadline for submissions to the COMMANDO is noon Monday for briefs the week of publication. Articles may be submitted on IBM format computer disk or via electronic mail. Non-electronic submissions must be typed, double-spaced. All submissions must include the name and telephone number of a person to call.

Open Line

The Commander's Open Line is your direct line to the base commander for questions or suggestions about subjects of concern to the Hurlburt Field community. To receive a response, leave your name, unit and telephone number. Open lines of general interest will be printed in the COMMANDO. Other questions will be answered by letter or phone call. Remember, the quickest and most efficient way to resolve a problem is to talk directly to the agency responsible. This gives them an opportunity to help you and perhaps improve their process. However, if you're not satisfied with the answer you receive, feel free to give the commander a call at 884-OPEN (6736), or e-mail your concerns to commando@hurlburt.af.mil.

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ORI preparation:

All Airmen should know Airman's Manual

Courtesy of the
16th CES

To better prepare yourself for upcoming operational readiness exercises and this summer's operational readiness inspection, there's an Air Force Web site available with an interactive Airman's Man-

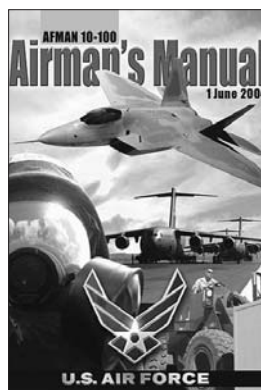
ual, AFMAN 10-100.

The secure site, which requires a common access card to access, even has quizzes to test your knowledge. It's every Airman's duty and responsibility to know what to do in a wartime environment.

Knowing the Airman's

Manual inside and out is one of the most comprehensive ways to prepare yourself for, and ultimately, have the ability to survive and operate during wartime.

Visit the interactive Web site at <https://commweb.hill.af.mil/AMT/>.



Courtesy photo

DUI Tracker

Dec. 16 – Jan. 5: 1 DUI

This year: 1

DUIs for 2005: 31

Last DUI: 16th Contracting Squadron, Jan. 1

Days since last DUI:

16th OG..93	16th MSG..4
16th MXG..26	16th MDG..372

Totals are current as of Jan. 5.

Don't Drink and Drive. Call AADD at 884-8844

Potential saves this year: 18

Airmen deploy with lighter load with... New mobility bag

by Tech. Sgt. Mark Getsy
386th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA – A new mobility-bag process will now “lighten” the load of deployed members and save the Air Force money, too.

The 386th Air Expeditionary Wing and two other locations are test sites for a new process to preposition mobility bags and chemical warfare defense equipment in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

An Air Force message stated the effort is in line with the Air Force’s vision to improve agile combat support as people deploy, and help reduce excess-baggage charges and the number of aircraft seats lost due to weight restrictions.

The process is expected to eliminate the need for most deployed personnel to carry individual protective equipment.

Master Sgt. Micki Larson-Olson, NCO in charge of the expeditionary theater distribution center here, said the concept has been in the works for a few deployment rotations, and the next Aerospace Expeditionary Force rotation will be the first to take part in the mass issue process.

“When we arrived, we only had 18 C-bags built,” Sergeant Larson-Olson said. “So, our first major task was to check through the inventory, replace all the expired assets we had on hand and begin building new bags. We currently have more than 1,300 C-bags ready and in the system.”

That number is going to grow as

many deployed troops are required to turn in their C-bags before leaving to be readied for the next rotation.

“We’re expecting about 1,000 more bags to come in,” she said. “We sent out a list of those needing to turn their C-bags in and those who are exempt. We’ve had a constant flow of bags daily.”

In addition to the C-bags, people will no longer be required to bring the mobility bags, or A-bags, with them beginning with the next rotation.

“We currently have 1,200 A-bags on hand. That’s our authorization to have here at the center,” Sergeant Larson-Olson said. “These bags will be used for the people coming in on the next rotation. Once their deployment is done, they will turn them in.”

To store all this excess baggage, a new expeditionary theater distribution center is under construction and is expected to open by Feb. 1. Sergeant Larson-Olson said the new center will also be the home of the wing processing line and storage area for individual body armor.

“It’s going to be hard work at first getting everything moved in place and into the system,” said mobility technician Airman 1st Class Christopher Haskin. “But, once that’s completed, it will become much easier.”

People getting ready to go back home seem to like the new initiative.

“I heard about it while I was at Ramstein (Air Base, Germany),” said (Chaplain) Lt. Col. Michael Tinnon, wing chaplain’s office. “It’s nice not having to haul so many bags back and forth. I think it’s wonderful.”



Photograph by Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes

STEP promotions

Tech. Sgt. Kim Welch, 16th Civil Engineer Squadron, is overcome with emotion after Col. Paul Harmon, 16th Special Operations Wing vice commander, presents her a “stripes for exceptional performers” promotion Dec. 19 at the 16th CES conference room. Others selected for STEP promotion include: Master Sgts. Cedric Barron, 16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron; Stephen McCreery, 4th Special Operations Squadron; James Delap, 16th Operations Support Squadron; Tech. Sgts. James Bowling, 20th SOS; Stephen Hoist, 16th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron; Andrea Luna, 16th Mission Support Squadron; Brian Orr, 15th SOS.

Remote crash landing: 505th CCW radar unit helps rescue crash victims in California mountains

by Vivian Wilson
Western Air Defense Sector
Public Affairs

Airmen of the 505th Command and Control Wing assisted in the rescue of two people who crash-landed their glider in remote southern California mountains in December by, “doing what they do every day,” said Lt. Col. Robert Mulheran, 84th Radar Evaluation Squadron commander.

Radar analysis provided by the 84th RADES, which recently became part of the 505th CCW, was key in point-

ing authorities to the precise location of the crash.

The mission of the 84th RADES, which is located at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, is to monitor and assess the status of Federal Aviation Administration and military radars around the country.

The unit is also heavily involved in programs creating a single common operating picture to assist officials in homeland security, counterdrug, search and rescue operations and flight safety.

A Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department helicopter rescued the instructor

pilot and a student less than two miles from their last radar sighting, said John Henderson, who has been with the 84th RADES since 1999. He has personally been involved in saving 11 lives by finding air crash sites.

“Their sailplane had been towed to an altitude of 9,300 feet before being released in the area of Mount Baden Powell in the San Gabriel Mountains of southern California,” said Mr. Henderson.

The expected one-hour, local flight to an airport just 10 miles away became a crash landing and overnight stay

when the glider flew into an area with no lift.

The pilot crashed the sailplane into scrub brush Dec. 3.

The two had no major injuries, although they did suffer from an overnight stay in sub-freezing weather.

Mr. Henderson used radar data to pinpoint the aircraft’s last known location, speed, heading and altitude. From that, he determined the likely crash site. He passed the data to the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center at Langley AFB, Va., which forwarded the information to

the California Civil Air Patrol.

A California CAP aircrew spotted the aircraft around 7:30 a.m. the next day. Then, the sheriff’s department helicopter made the rescue.

“Without an active distress beacon signal – or any other hard data on the aircraft’s last known position – having access to this radar data enabled us to focus the search on the most likely position where they could have landed,” said Capt. Bob Keilholtz, Air Force Auxiliary Civil Air Patrol. (Capt. Nathan Broshear, 505th CCW Public Affairs, contributed to this article.)

'Ball dropped' in desert location New Year's Eve

by Capt. Eric Badger
379th Air Expeditionary
Wing Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA — With inspiration from New York — the city that never sleeps — Airmen at this desert base that never sleeps got to drop the ball this New Year's Eve.

In less than 72 hours, some 379th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron members constructed a New Year's Eve Ball like the one dropped at New York's Times Square every year.

"We've got New York beaten — hands down," said electrician Staff Sgt. Jacob Phillips, the New Year's Eve Ball project officer.

New York's ball is six feet in diameter. The one he helped build has a 12-foot diameter. The "Big Apple's" ball weighs 1,042 pounds, versus the ton the desert

ball weighs. But the New York ball has more lights — 696 to 417.

Similar to the Times Square tradition, which dates to 1907, the squadron suspended the ball about 100 feet in the air and slowly lowered it from a crane on New Year's Eve as the audience counted down the seconds until 2006.

When the last second ticked away, about 230 volts of electricity helped illuminate the 417 lights.

Sergeant Phillips said the flamboyant ball had humble beginnings.

"It was made out of an unused sewage tank," he said. "The tank was ordered by our plumbing folks and was too big for what the shop needed it for. So, they gave it to us and we sculpted it (the ball)," he said.

"This is the first time the base has ever done anything like this, so it's really



A 2,000-pound New Year's Eve Ball lights up the sky over a Southwest Asia deployed location.

exciting to be a part of it," Sergeant Phillips continued.

The civil engineers built legs for the ball and transported it by flat-bed truck from their compound to the base's Memorial Plaza, where the New Year's Eve celebration took place.

"The entire squadron

pitched in to help out on this project," said electrician Senior Airman Joseph McGee. "From the electrical shop to plumbing, HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) and structures, each shop contributed big time to make this a memorable New Year for everyone."



U.S. Navy photograph by Petty Officer 3rd Class Aaron Burden
Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandon Wilkerson changes light bulbs outlining the hull number on the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan Dec. 28.

Brothers In Arms

Army

Troops conducting urban operations soon will have the capabilities of superheroes, being able to sense through 12 inches of concrete to determine if someone is inside a building. The new "Radar Scope" will give warfighters searching a building the ability to tell within seconds if someone is in the next room. The Radar Scope, developed by Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, is expected to be fielded to troops in Iraq as soon as this spring.

Marines

WASHINGTON — Over the past week, U.S. Marines discovered more than 10 tons of munitions hidden in Iraq's Euphrates River Valley. Troops elsewhere found and seized other weapons caches on New Year's Day. Marines found 72 cache sites about 25 miles south of Fallujah during the weeklong Operation Green Trident, officials said Tuesday.

Navy

WASHINGTON — Navy F-14s performed an air strike near Bayji, strafing the target with 100 cannon rounds and using a precision-guided munition against insurgents placing an improvised explosive device. Air Force F-15s and Navy F/A-18s also provided close-air support to coalition troops near Balad and Tikrit.

Tax statements

MyPay delivers military, civilian W-2s faster than traditional mail

by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Service members, military retirees and annuitants and federal civilian employees paid by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service can expect to receive their 2005 tax statements by mail soon, a DFAS official said.

In fact, most retirees and annuitants already may have received theirs, with the last hard-copy mailings Saturday, the official confirmed.

Mailing of active-duty Army, Navy and Air Force W-2 forms won't begin until Jan. 24, but service members can access their forms on the "myPay" Web site beginning Jan. 21. W-2 mailings for Reservists from the Air Force, Army, Navy began Wednesday, but the forms were posted online by Saturday.

Active-duty and Reserve Marines can check their mailboxes after

Availability dates for military, civilian W-2's

Active-duty Air Force, Army, Navy: Will post Jan. 21 on myPay and will be mailed via U.S. Post Office Jan. 24-27

Reserve Air Force, Army, Navy: Will post Saturday and will be mailed Wednesday through Saturday

Marine Corps active and Reserve: Will post Tuesday and will be mailed Jan. 12-16

Civilian employee: Will post Monday and be mailed Tuesday through Jan. 21

Note: Actual postal mail delivery may vary by location and holiday mail volume.

Thursday or access their myPay accounts beginning Tuesday.

Mailing for DOD civilians' W-2s will begin Tuesday, and the forms will be posted on myPay beginning Monday.

An increasingly large percentage of the almost six million people the finance agency serves now receive their pay and tax statements electronically through myPay, the official said. By doing so, customers get their statements quicker and more securely, said Pat Shine, director of DFAS' Military and Civilian Pay Services.

A state-of-the-art encryption technology incorporated into the myPay system, which users access through a personal identification number, safeguards personal information that's more vulnerable to theft when transmitted by mail, the official said.

DFAS clients who have never set up their myPay accounts or have forgotten their PIN numbers can set up or get new ones through the myPay Web site, he said.

New internet blog trend threatens OPSEC

by Master Sgt. Mick Cook
OPSEC program manager

Operational security is not something that should be put on the back burner and taken lightly.

With an Internet connection, Airmen can send and post messages around the world instantly after an event happens. Details can be transmitted back to family and friends in the form of e-mails, and with new technology, can be posted in seconds on the Web's fastest growing trend, a Web log.

A Web log is a personal Web site that contains dated entries of personal opinions, thoughts and essays. Web logs often feature links to news articles or other "blogs" on the Internet.

Just as blogs can provide family and friends with information, blogs

can also provide an opportunity for the enemy to gain valuable information that can be used in future attacks. What may seem like innocent information could be valuable knowledge to someone who knows what they are looking for. Much of the information that is collected by terrorist organizations is a compilation of information gathered from unclassified sources.

Airmen are representatives of the U.S. military, and their words can be taken to reflect the views of the U.S. government. Something as simple as a negative comment written in frustration can be used by the enemy to portray the multinational forces unfavorably. What is posted on a Web log is free to the public; it can be used by the media and quoted to represent the facts and opinions of the military. In this sense, the views of a

Al Qaeda retrieved 80 percent of thier intelligence from open-source material when it attacked the United States on Sept. 11.

disgruntled Airman could be published as the views of all service members, disrupting morale and esprit de corps, but more importantly, the mission.

Some important areas of sensitivity in military situations are: military movements, activities, specific unit information and base security. Specific times or dates of future operations or movements should never be disclosed. Even figures such as guard-duty hours or specific work

hours shouldn't be discussed.

The enemy, like a thief or robber, watches for patterns to learn when is the best time to strike. The element of surprise is an important factor in many operations. The location of future or current operations should not be disclosed. Sensitive but unclassified information is not acceptable to transmit on the phone, letters or e-mails - consequently they are off limits for the Web.

Photos of deployed locations are never allowed on a personal Web site unless cleared through public affairs and an OPSEC professional. Al Qaeda retrieved 80 percent of thier intelligence from open-source material when it attacked the United States on Sept. 11. Don't let the information posted on a personal Web site or blog aid the terroists their next attack.

ARMED FORCES COMM INC
CS/HOMELAND HERO
595088
5 X 7.00

Week in History

Jan. 1, 1976 – The 20th Special Operations Squadron activated at Hurlburt Field.

Jan. 2, 1942 – Gen. Henry “Hap” Arnold directed the establishment of the first numbered Air Force, which was later designated the 8th Air Force.

Jan. 3, 1990 – Manuel Noriega was captured and flown to Miami during Operation Just Cause.

Jan. 4, 1957 – The Military Air Transport Service completed “Operation Safe Haven” bringing 10,000 refugees to the United States.

Jan. 5, 1943 – Allied Air Forces in Africa were activated under Maj. Gen. Carl Spaatz.

Jan. 6, 1985 – Maj. Gen. James Doolittle assumed command of the 8th Air Force.



Photograph by Staff Sgt. Ricky Bloom

Djibouti training

DJIBOUTI, Africa – An Air Force pararescueman surfaces after dive currency training off the coast here. The Airman is a reservist from the 304th Rescue Squadron at Portland International Airport, Ore.

Special OPERATORS

Congratulations to the following technical sergeants who graduated Dec. 15 from Class 06-1 of the Tyndall NCO Academy:

Honor Graduates
Air Force Special Operations Command
Christian Mackenzie
16th Logistics Readiness Squadron
Allyson Koin
16th Mission Support Squadron
Stuart Saunders

Graduates
AFSOC
Maria Lloyd
James Schroeder
Alfredo Surdilla
6th Special Operations Squadron
Nilsa Montano
16th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
Chad Ream
16th Civil Engineer

Squadron
David Saugstad
16th Communications Squadron
Jack Dewhurst
16th Component Maintenance Squadron
Jeffrey Harding
Michael Swahn
16th Comptroller Squadron
Damon Bryant
Jeffrey Cross
16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron
John Andrews Jr.
Robert Lancaster
Matthew Nolan
16th Helicopter Maintenance Squadron
John Donald Jr.
Jonathan Dulin
Charlie Flores
16th Mission Support Squadron
Bonita Donald
16th Operations Support Squadron
Frederick Hutchison

16th Security Forces Squadron
David Arseneau
Terrance Hyland
16th Services Squadron
Rosa Nazario
Heather Turner
19th SOS
Matthew Ardis
James Knight
20th SOS
Jonathan Saleska
23rd Special Tactics Squadron
Clinton Dalton
25th Information Operations Squadron
William Carbaugh
720th Operations Support Squadron
Jeffrey Chambers
823rd RED HORSE Squadron
Donald Cicchetti
Russell Hostetter
U.S. Air Force Combat Weather Center
Nicholas DiTondo

**CALVARY BAPTIST
CHURCH
CS/MILITARY
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**DAVID G
THOMPSON/GEICO
CS/AUTO INS
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Need that may never be fully met...

Hurlburt, Eglin members make annual trip to Honduran orphanages

by Senior Airman Heidi Davis
16th SOW Public Affairs

Close your eyes and imagine for a moment that you're 6 years old and living in Honduras. Your parents have told you that they can't afford to take care of you, so they're sending you to a city orphanage to live with 45 other abandoned children. You have nothing more than the clothes on your back and a few items to call your own. For the next several years, scarcity is all you will know, until you're old enough to make it on your own.

For the children who live in Honduras – more specifically, La Ceiba and Soto Cano orphanages – this is reality.

Each year since 1992, Hurlburt Field has flown supplies to the children at Aldea Infantil SOS de La Ceiba and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe orphanages. This year, 28 Airmen flew to Honduras Dec. 20 on a 15th Special Operations Squadron MC-130H Talon II and a 9th SOS

"We do what we can to help, but there is always a need in place."

Maj. Manuel Torres,
Joint Special Operations University

MC-130P Combat Shadow with 16,000 pounds of supplies.

"We do what we can to help, but there is always a need in place," said Maj. Manuel Torres, Joint Special Operations University and Operation Christmas Wish co-founder. "We try to give them a few hours of joy and supplies to help make their lives more comfortable."

The Honduran government provides the living quarters, but other supplies are gathered solely through donations and outside help like Operation Christmas Wish, Major Torres said.

"Each of Hurlburt's squadrons were given a list of the children at Aldea and Nuestra Señora de

Guadalupe," said Col. Rob Toth, 15th Special Operations Squadron commander. "Individuals selected a child from the list and filled a plastic container with toys, a toothbrush, crayons, paper and other items the child needs. It's a way to bring hope to the children at least once a year."

After a roughly six-month drive for supplies, the aircraft were loaded for a four-hour flight to the Central American country.

Immediately after arriving at Base Aérea in La Ceiba, Honduras, the Operation Christmas Wish crew and 20 Honduran soldiers unloaded the gifts from the planes and onto trucks headed for the orphanages.

"The Honduran soldiers were selected by the Base Aérea commander to help with the Operation Christmas Wish mission," Major Torres said. "The base knows the importance of our mission and anticipates our arrival months in advance. The people are always willing to do what they can to help."

The 20-minute bus ride to Aldea revealed the destitution of the country as the bus passed rundown, one-room shacks, barefoot children playing in muddy, trash-filled streets and women washing the family's clothes in a nearby creek.

Pausing at the beginning of the Aldea driveway to allow Capt. Darin Wheeler, 15th SOS, to change into Santa Claus, then Operation Christmas Wish went into action, to sweeten the lives of the children.

Santa Claus is a symbol of hope for the children. When they see "him" arriving on the bus, they know good things are to come, Captain Wheeler said.

As the bus pulled through the orphanage gate, 45 children ran alongside shouting, "Santa! Santa! Santa!" The children rushed the steps of the bus, as Santa Claus stepped down to see them and make this day more special than any other day of the year.

The remaining Airmen also went into action smothering the children with attention and filling the children's bellies with sweet treats of doughnuts, juice and candy.

"I didn't know how to react at first," said Tech. Sgt. Lance Bauer, 16th Security Forces Squadron. "This little boy came up and held my hand, and others hugged me and held on tight. I guess they were just looking for love from someone."

If an empty lap was available, the children eagerly jumped to the opportunity for affection.



A young girl (left) excitedly opens her box of goodies Dec. 20 after receiving it from Santa Claus at Aldea Infantil SOS de La Ceiba, Honduras.

"Before we left for Honduras, I looked at some of the photos of the children I saw last year," said Airman 1st Class Kimberly Batts, 16th Communications Squadron. "When we arrived at the orphanage (in La Ceiba), it was sad to see that most of those children were still here this year."

Before heading for Soto Cano, the Operation Christmas Wish crew said goodbye to the children – most with tears in their eyes.

"The impact that it (the trip) had on me was pretty significant," said Tech. Sgt. Jason Hopper, 25th Information Operations Squadron. "It makes me feel really good to be a part of something like this knowing how much it means to the kids...I'm volunteering again next year."

Although the staff at Aldea Infantil SOS de La Ceiba does what it can to take care of the children, the needs are always present. This year, Team Hurlburt was able to donate a refrigerator, cribs, chairs, clothing, toiletries and school supplies, but more items will be required each year, as the number of children increases and the necessities become greater, Major Torres said.

After a night of rest at Soto Cano Air Base, the team headed for the second orphanage – Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, which is located just a few miles away from the base. Capt. Jim Haama, Soto Cano airfield operations, drove a 15-passenger van with eight crewmembers and gifts stacked to the ceiling to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

Once at the orphanage, the crew unloaded the gifts and talked with some of the teachers and resident children.

"The orphanage houses 26 boys, 15 girls and nine single mothers,"

See **HONDURAS**, Page 9



Photographs by Senior Airman Heidi Davis

Lt. Col. Rob Toth, 15th Special Operations Squadron commander and Operation Christmas Wish commander, is tackled by children looking for hugs Dec. 20 at Aldea Infantil SOS de La Ceiba in La Ceiba, Honduras.

HONDURAS, Continued from Page 8

said Lesby, a teacher at the orphanage. "The children are sent here because they've either been removed from their homes because of abuse or their parents are too poor to care for them."

"The approximately 45 children are taught by five workers up until the sixth grade," she said. "Once they have finished the sixth grade, they must leave because we can no longer meet their needs."

The crew was given a chance to see first hand what it was like to live in Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

The orphanage is broken up into



Residents at Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Santo Cano, Honduras, cook all meals over open fire.

about six small homes located on the top and bottom of a large hill with a small schoolhouse. Because of the poverty-stricken area in which the orphanage is located, items are in short supply and usually at risk of being stolen. For those reasons, it's difficult to meet even the simplest needs of the residents, Captain Haama said as he led the crew on a tour of the facilities.

The kitchen had black mold, peeling walls, missing tiles and no electricity. Because of a lack of money for gas grills or electric stoves, the residents cooked meals over open fire.

"The kitchen ceiling is blackened with ash because of several accidental cooking fires," Captain Haama said. "They desperately need a better method for cooking."

Moving on, the crew took an astounding look at one of the orphanage bathrooms. One word to describe it – dangerous. The room was large enough for a toilet and little less. The toilet was covered in rust and mold. Pipes were falling out of the crumbled wall, and wires hung from the ceiling.

Captain Haama led the group to another house to see the small bedrooms and eating area.

"This house is a little 'nicer' – I use that word loosely because, by our standard, they could all use work," Captain Haama said. "We've (Soto Cano) tried to do our part to fix broken screens, buy silverware and



A postboard of photographs at Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Soto Cano, Honduras, remembers orphans past and present.

clothes pins, but the people need so much more."

Driving to the bottom of the hill, Captain Haama showed the crew the missionary quarters.

"Several churches send transit missionaries to stay near the orphanage and help make repairs, lay cement for well covers and mold shingles," Captain Haama said. "As of now, all supplies are stored in the missionary quarters in two rooms."

The ride back to the base was quiet as the team pondered what they had seen. It was a place most will never forget.

The people and planes returned home later that evening with pictures in their mind and memories in their hearts.

"We'll begin planning for next year's trip in the summer," Colonel Toth said. "Hopefully, we can bring back even more supplies."

**RHINO LININGS OF OKALOOSA
CS/ADVANCE PROTE
610582
3 X 5.00**

**MILITARY MEDIA
CS/STATIONED LOC
595035
2 X 5.00**

Military

USAFSOS courses

The U.S. Air Force Special Operations School will conduct a Contemporary Insurgency Warfare Course Jan. 30 – Feb. 3. Students will learn to comprehend the insurgent ideologies, strategies and cultural dynamics of intrastate conflict and doctrinal approaches to countering insurgent movements.

For more information, call Joyce Weber at 884-4731 or Capt. Laura Johnson at 884-6984 or visit <https://www.hurlburt.af.mil/milonly/tenantunits/jsou>.

A Russia-Eurasia Asia Orientation Course will meet Feb. 6-10. This course is designed for personnel preparing to live in or deploy to the Balkans, Russia or the former Soviet republics of central Asia. It focuses on the cultural, historical, political, economic, social, religious and security dynamics of the Russia-Eurasia area.

For more information, call Maj. Danny Boyd at 884-1846 or visit <https://www.hurlburt.af.mil/milonly/tenantunits/jsou>.

Community

Claims

Any persons with a claim for or against the estate of Senior Airman Leland Aslinger, 16th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, should call 1st Lt. Ming Xu at 982-5459 or e-mail ming.xu@hurlburt.af.mil.

Munch & Mend

The base chapel will hold Munch & Mend at 5 p.m. Monday. Airmen can enjoy a free home-cooked meal while having minor repairs done, or stripes, patches or name tapes sewn on one clean uniform. For more information, call Bill White at 884-7371 or Jimmie Thomas at 315-4746.

NCOA

Hurlburt Field's Commando Non-commissioned Officers' Association, Chapter 44 and Auxiliary 248, will hold its monthly meeting at 6 p.m. Jan. 28 in J.R. Rockers All Ranks Destination Room. Each member is requested to attend and bring a friend.

For more information, call Master Sgt. Bob Love at 884-2695 or Charles Glotzbach at 884-1771.

Casino Night

J.R. Rockers is sponsoring Casino Night at 7 p.m. Jan. 13. Table games will be available for patrons age 18 and older. Club members will receive \$5 worth of free chips. Chips earned



Courtesy photograph

Boy, oh boy!

James Collier, born at 6:36 a.m. Sunday, was the first baby born in 2006 at Eglin Air Force Base's 96th Medical Group. James is the son of Staff Sgt. James and Alicia Collier, Headquarters Air Force Special Operations Command.

have no cash value, but may be used at the casino auction held at the end of the evening. For more information, call 884-6469.

Observances

Volunteers are needed to serve as chair and co-chair for three upcoming ethnic observances. They will organize, coordinate and plan events to promote awareness and understanding about different cultures.

For more information, call the following points of contact:

Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday. Jan. 16, Master Sgt. Norman Williams, 884-6844

African-American History Month. February, Sergeant Williams, 884-6844

Women's History Month. March Tech. Sgt. Jeannie Crosby, 884-2631.

Volunteers wanted

The Volunteer Resource Program office has new office hours. Dee Dee Rodriguez can be reached 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday through Wednesday. Walk-in hours are 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

The VRP coordinator will assist you with all your volunteer needs. For more information, call Ms. Rodriguez at 884-1533.

Newcomers' brief

The Commando Connection, Hurlburt Field's newcomers' briefing, is at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday in the base theater. The briefing is deemed mandatory by the wing commander, and covers base-required material and local law enforcement highlights of the area.

Transition assistance

The Transition Assistance Program seminar is a three-day workshop being held 7:20 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday in the family support center.

It's to help separating and retiring military members and their families transition into the civilian sector.

Facilitators cover career decisions,

job applications, job interviews, economic trends, personal appearance, and provide guidance and support for the transitioning member.

Resumé workshop

A resumé writing workshop will be held 1-3 p.m. Monday in the family support center.

Information will cover how to translate skills and develop the resumé. Various examples of cover and thank-you letters will be provided.

Club dues

Enlisted club dues will increase from \$5 to \$7 beginning with the February billing cycle. For more information, see the Jan. 13 issue of the *Commando*.

Classes

Online tuition

Active-duty members can process their online tuition assistance requests through the Air Force Virtual Education Center by logging in to the Air Force Portal at <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af5/FAF/fafHome.jsp> and visiting the "Career" or "Life" sections. For more information, call 884-6724.

Spring registration

Spring registration for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University continues through today in building 90220. The spring term begins Tuesday. For more information, call 581-2106 or view the online schedule at www.erau.edu/fortwaltonbeach.

University Arkansas

The University of Arkansas, located at Hurlburt Field, offers a Master of Science with a major in operations management. Complete a degree in one year. Classes start this month, March, May, August and October.

For more information, call Sherry Del Castillo at 884-3844.

At the movies

Prices are \$3.50 for adults and \$1.75 for children age 6 and older. Movies start at 7 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

Hurlburt Field – 884-7648

Friday – Yours, Mine and Ours (PG) A widow and widower fall in love and get married, but the resulting combined eighteen children make for a hair-raising situation under one roof.

Saturday – Get Rich or Die Trying (R) An orphaned street kid makes his mark in the drug trade, but finally dares to leave the violence of his former life behind to pursue a promising career in the music business as a rapper.

Sunday – Zathura (PG) After their father leaves for work, leaving them in the care of their older sister, six-year-old Danny and ten-year old Walter discover an old tattered metal board game, "Zathura." After trying unsuccessfully to get his brother to play the game with him, Danny starts to play on his own. From his first move, Danny realizes this is no ordinary board game.

Eglin – 882-1066

Friday – Walk the Line (PG-13) He picked cotton, sold door to door, and served in the Air Force. He was a voice of rebellion that changed the face of rock and roll. An outlaw before today's rebels were born - and an icon they would never forget. He did all this before turning 30. And his name was Johnny Cash. *WALK THE LINE* explores the early years of the music legend, an artist who transcended musical boundaries to touch people around the globe.

Saturday – Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (PG-13) In his fourth year at Hogwarts, Harry faces his greatest challenges and dangers yet. When he is selected under mysterious circumstances as a contestant in the Triwizard Tournament, Harry must compete against the best young wizards from schools all over Europe. But as he prepares, signs begin to point to the return of Lord Voldemort. Before long, Harry is playing not just for the Cup, but for his life.

Sunday – Derailed (R) Advertising executive Charles is just another Chicago commuter who regularly catches the 8:43 A.M. train to work. But the one day he misses his train and meets Lucinda, his life is changed forever. Lucinda is charming, beautiful and seductive. Despite the fact that each are married with children, their attraction to one another is magnetic. Lunch dates quickly become cock-tails after work.

(Editor's note: Movies are subject to change. Telephone numbers are provided for patrons to confirm dates.)

Base chapel



Catholic Mass

Saturday, 5:30 p.m.
Sunday, 7:15 and 10 a.m.

Confessions:

Saturday, 4:30 to 5 p.m., or by request
Youth: 5 p.m. Sunday
Religious Education: September – May

Protestant Services

Sunday, 8:30 a.m. (Traditional worship)
11:30 a.m. (Contemporary worship)

Religious Education: August – May

Youth and Singles groups available

Jewish Services (882-2111)

Sabbath services: Friday, 7:30 p.m., Eglin Chapel Center

Muslim Services (882-2111), Eglin Chapel Center

Jumuah: Friday, 12:45 p.m.

For more information, call 884-7795.

Airman Against Drunk Driving

For a free, confidential ride home, call AADD at 884-8844. Don't drink and drive.

24-hour Fraud, Waste and Abuse hotline:

Hurlburt Field – 884-6322

Air Force – (800) 538-8429

Department of Defense – (800) 424-9098

Male, female athletes of year announced

by **Steve VanWert**
AF Services Agency

One shoots at targets, the other at strikeouts, but both are the Air Force Services Agency's Athletes of the Year for 2005.

Maj. Roger Sherman, a special assistant to the commander of U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., is the 2005 Male Athlete of the Year. He is a member of the Air Force Action Pistol Team, which is comprised of some of the Air Force's top shooters.

Staff Sgt. Twyla Sears, 353rd Operations Support Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Japan, is the 2005 Female Athlete of the Year. Sergeant Sears is a pitcher for the All Armed Forces Women's Softball

Team that won the Amateur Softball Association's 2004 Western Regional Softball Championship. She earned First Team All-American honors.

Both athletes were "stunned" to hear the news that they had been selected.

"It's great to be recognized for something you've worked so hard for," Major Sherman said. "I was overwhelmed with gratitude to my wife and son for all the sacrifices they made, allowing me to work toward my goals."

Sergeant Sears said, "I think this award shows everyone that you're not just a statistic, and that you're valued and recognized for accomplishments that aren't necessarily job-related."

Sergeant Sears is recognized as one of the military's best softball players. Her

all-star team advanced to represent the Armed Forces at the Western Regional Tournament.

Her performance led the armed forces team to the championship. She went on to pitch the Armed Forces team to second place in the Amateur Softball Association's Major Level Division Championship.

Major Sherman was the only military service member selected to the U.S. Practical Shooting National team. His event combines many dimensions of shooting, including drawing from a holster and shooting at multiple moving targets. He finished sixth of 700 competitors at the U.S. Practical Shooting Association National Handgun Championship.

In the bleachers

High Five Poker Race

The "High Five Poker Race" will be at 7 a.m. Jan. 20 at the Aderholt Fitness Center. Awards will be presented for the first three places in each age category. Participants with one of the top ten poker hands will receive a prize. Register by noon Jan. 19 at any of the fitness centers for this free event. For more information, call 884-6884.

Baseball

Registration for youth baseball, ages 5-14 and girls' softball, ages 10-14, will be Monday - Feb. 10. Cost is \$45 per player or \$90 per family.

All players must have a current physical and birth certificates on file at the youth center by March 10. For more information, call youth sports at 884-6355.

Airman muscles competition

by **Senior Airman Kerry Solan-Johnson**
435th ABW Public Affairs

When 5-year-old Troy Saunders saw Tom Platz - the man known most for his sculpted legs in the bodybuilding world - his mind was made up.

"It made me want to have muscles like that," said Master Sgt. Troy Saunders a transportation specialist with the 435th Materiel Maintenance Squadron. "From then on, I ran, jumped and did pushups - anything to get in shape."

More than 30 years after seeing Mr. Platz, Sergeant Saunders has lifted and sculpted his way to countless titles in bodybuilding and the 220-pound class in power lifting. He earned his most recent titles in Europe.

"During the last eight weeks, I have participated in seven bodybuilding championships in Germany and Switzerland," Sergeant Saunders said. "The highlight was winning my class and the overall title at the 2005 German bodybuilding championships."

Sergeant Saunders' success lays in his dedication to his sport. He does heavy lifting - squats, bench presses and dead lifts - 90 minutes a day, three times a week to maintain body mass. He does cardio workouts six hours a week. His exercises and times vary according to the compe-



Photograph by Christine June

Master Sgt. Troy Saunders, 435th Materiel Maintenance Squadron, poses in during a competition in Germany.

tition for which he is gearing up.

"There are distinctly different goals when I'm competing for bodybuilding as opposed to powerlifting," Sergeant Saunders said.

Bodybuilding judges look at the appearance of overall muscle mass, for a minimal amount of body fat - the less fat, the more muscularity, the more "ripped look," Sergeant Saunders said.

Powerlifting's merit is solely in the amount of weight lifted.

Sergeant Saunders' muscles mass earned him the German title, despite giving up 40 pounds to the majority of his competitors.

"I was the most conditioned athlete," the sergeant from Kingsley, Iowa, said. "That was really my strong point going into the competition."

The German win qualified Sergeant Saunders to compete for Mr. Universe. But, that was a competition he

passed up in order to compete in the World Championships.

"The World Championships and Mr. Universe fell on the same weekend. I opted for the World Championships because I knew it would be a challenge," Sergeant Saunders said.

In 2005, Sergeant Saunders earned more than 10 titles, including a win in the 220-pound class at the U.S. Forces European Championships. He also earned the 220-pound class and the outstanding lifter award at the 2005 U.S.A. Military National Powerlifting Championships.

The titles don't bring Sergeant Saunders to the resolve that he's reached his peak, but serve to push him forward in his bodybuilding and powerlifting endeavors.

"I've been asking myself: Do I need to keep doing this? This makes me want to strive a little longer - being almost 40 doesn't seem to be a roadblock at all," he said.

Sports standings

For more information on sports standings, call the Aderholt Fitness Center at 884-6884.

Over 30 basketball

Team	W	L
AFSOC	6	1
MDG	6	2
823rd RHS	5	2
MXG	4	2
COMM	4	2
LRS	4	3
SVS	3	3
CMS	2	3
505th 1	2	5
505th 2	1	4
MSS	1	5
39th IOS	0	6

Intramural basketball

National League		
Team	W	L
AFSOC	2	0
823rd RHS	1	0
AMXS 2	1	0
SVS	1	0
EMS 1	2	1
DET 3	1	1
AMXS 1	1	1
MDG 2	1	2
23rd STS	0	2
COMM2	0	3

American League		
Team	W	L
25 IOS	3	0
LRS	2	0
MDG 1	1	0
CES	2	1
HMXS	1	1
COMM 1	1	2
CPTS	1	2

OSS 0 2
0 3

Intramural horseshoes

Team	W	L
823rd RHS 1	8	2
823rd RHS 2	7	3
CES	6	4
25 IOS	3	6
39 IOS	2	6
39 IOS 2	2	7

Intramural bowling

International league

Team	W	L
HMXS	66	30
39th IOS	60	36
823rd RHS	56	40
LRS	54	42
505 EXS 2	53	43
AFSOC B	52	44
AFSOC A	48	48
505th EXS	46	50
JSOU	46	50
AMXS	43	53
	34	62

National league

Team	W	L
SVS A	68	28
505th CCW	66	30
CMS A	61	35
AFSOC C	56	40
SVS B	52	44
CMS B	52	44
CS	50	46
Chiefs	34	62
MDG	65	